

LAND USE



Historical Land Use

Original inhabitants of the area were Native Americans of the Missouri, Osage, Fox, and Sac tribes who depended upon the abundant wildlife resources (SCS 1992b, 1975). The first white settlers of Missouri, the French, laid claim to much of the area in 1712. The United States took ownership in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase. The Fabius River was named around 1800 by a Spanish surveyor, Don Antonio Soulard. Treaties signed with native tribes in 1804 and 1816 designated the area north of the Fabius River and 30 miles west of the mouth of the river as Indian territory. The last treaty in 1824 permanently turned the region over to the United States. The natives were taken to reservations around 1840. White settlers from Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Virginia were already arriving by that time and quickly established farming as the region's economic base.

Lewis County was founded in 1833 and originally included Clark, Knox, and Scotland counties. Present boundaries for the counties in the basin were established between 1825 and 1845. Human population in the region grew rapidly from 1840 to 1920, then declined. For example, the population of Lewis County increased from 6,578 in 1850 to 16,724 in 1900. By 1980 it had dropped to 10,901 (SCS 1992b). Other basin counties exhibited similar demographic trends, except Marion County, where the population has been relatively stable since 1900.

Much of the presettlement landscape of the basin was prairie (Schroeder 1982). The proportion of prairie land in Lewis, Knox, Scotland, and Schuyler counties ranged between 30% and 55%. Prairies of the basin were usually long and narrow since they were located on the narrow uplands or ridges along the three main, parallel-flowing streams. Wet, bottomland prairies occurred on nearly all floodplains. Wooded areas were found across the steeper rolling hills and adjacent to streams.

Modern Land Use

Characterization of modern land use was based upon the 1992 National Resources Inventory conducted by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, currently the Natural Resources Conservation Service (Table 4; SCS 1992a)(Figure 1u). Nearly 70% of the land in the watershed is used for agricultural purposes. Approximately 387,600 acres are cultivated for crops, and another 234,400 are in pasture. Only about 14% of the basin is forested (including grazed forest land). County crop production reports indicate that soybeans are the most important field crop in terms of acres planted and harvested (Sallee et al. 1996). Corn and wheat rank second and third. Annual livestock production in the counties of the basin ranges from 25,000 to 28,700 cattle and 8,000 to 32,500 hogs.

Soil Conservation Projects

Under the authority of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL 83-566), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers three soil conservation projects in the basin ([Table 5](#)). The Bear Creek project, completed in 1981, included 66 land treatment structures, 7 flood retardation structures, and 3 grade stabilization structures. Troublesome Creek and Grassy Creek projects are ongoing. In the mid 1970s, a watershed project for the Upper and Lower Middle Fabius drainage was proposed and investigated. Project planning was terminated in 1982 due to lack of support by local landowners; however, resource inventories and assessments were prepared (SCS 1977, 1978). In addition to these projects, NRCS administers three EARTH and four SALT (Special Area Land Treatment) projects in the basin that may impact a total area of 77,910 acres ([Table 5](#)).

Public Areas

There are 12 public areas totaling 13,053 acres within the Fabius River basin ([Table 6](#)). All areas except Ella Ewing Lake and Henry Sever Conservation Area provide access to basin streams. Deer Ridge Conservation Area, the largest publicly owned tract in the basin (6,921 acres), offers access to both the North Fabius and Middle Fabius rivers. Although many of the areas have developed parking lots adjacent to the streams, Soulard Access on the Fabius River provides the only concrete boat ramp. Five rock barbs (jetties) have been constructed at this site to decrease streambank erosion, improve stream habitat, and provide bank fishing access. Several accesses are located within a few miles of each other and provide excellent drop-off and pick-up points for one-day fishing/float trips (e.g. Dunn Ford to Blackhawk; Sunrise to Soulard). The Missouri Department of Conservation also manages the fisheries of nine small public impoundments in the basin with a combined total of 700 surface acres.



Table 4. Land use/cover estimates for the Fabius River watershed (from SCS 1992a).

Type	North-Middle Fabius (Acres)	South Fabius (Acres)	Percent of Total
Cropland	218,300	169,300	39.2
Hayland	53,700	19,400	7.0
Forest Land	79,400	55,900	13.7
Pasture Land	151,100	83,300	23.7
Misc/CRP	66,700	55,200	12.3
Other	20,200	16,400	3.7
Total	589,400	399,500	100

Figure 4. Land Use in the Fabius River watershed in Missouri and Iowa.

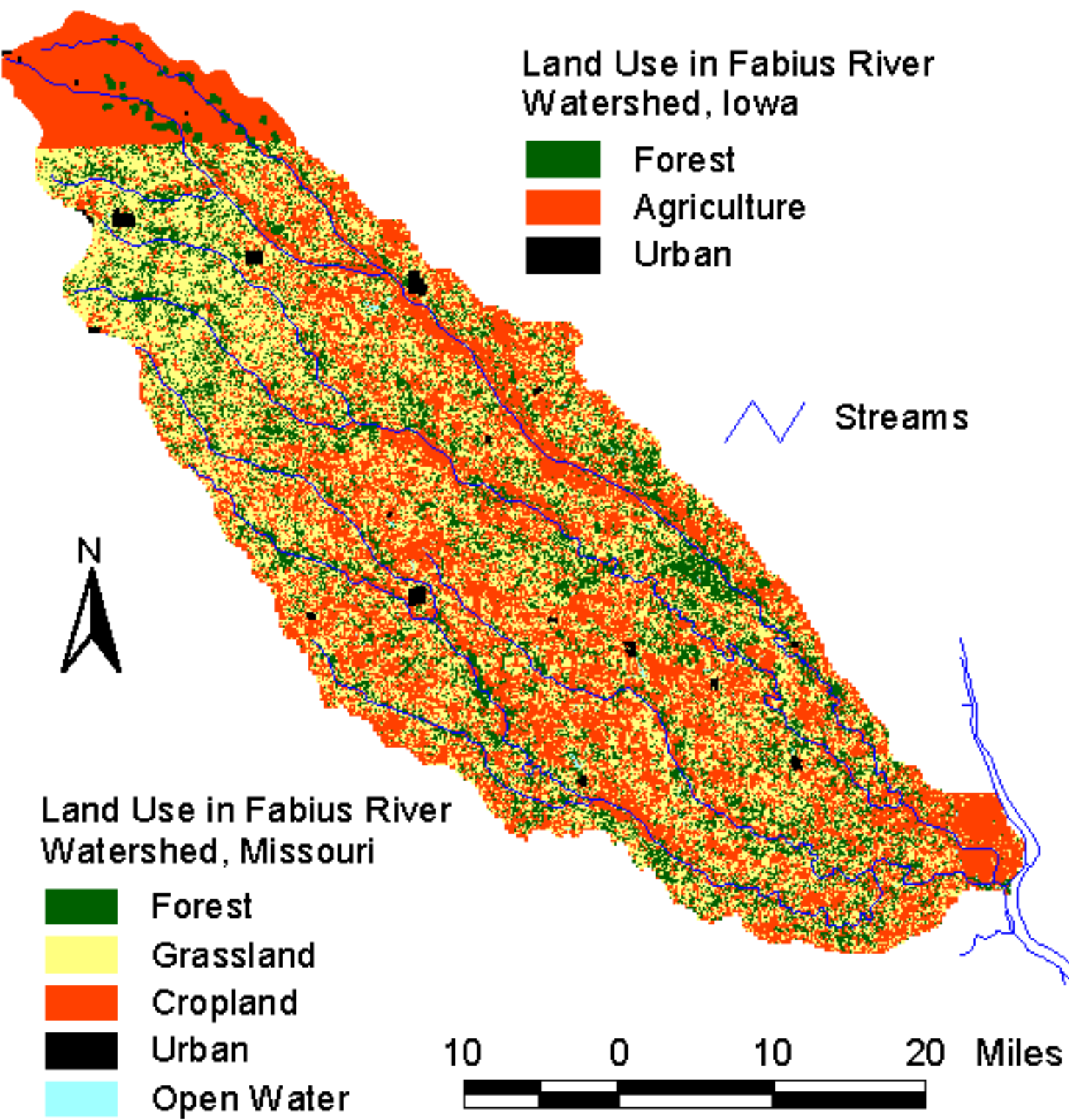


Table 5. Soil conservation projects in the Fabius River watershed as of 1999. Numbers in parenthesis represent the project area in acres.

County	PL-566	SALT	EARTH
Scotland, Schuyler, Knox, Lewis	Middle Fabius* (269,320 A)		
Clark, Scotland	Bear Creek (33,172 A)		
Knox, Lewis, Marion	Troublesome Creek (89,300 A)		
Lewis, Marion	Grassy Creek (35,600 A)		
Scotland			Bear Creek (22,094 A)
Lewis			Monticello Basin N. Fabius(15,500 A)
Knox		Hawkins Branch (5,744 A)	Troublesome Creek (28,600 A)
Knox		Little Troublesome (2,322 A)	
Marion		Franklin School Br. (2,450 A)	
Schuyler		Downing Lake (1,200 A)	

*Project planning terminated

Table 6. MDC-owned conservation areas (CA) and stream accesses (AC) located in the Fabius River watershed as of 1999.

Area Name	County	Acres	Development*
Indian Hills CA	Scotland	3,691	P, PC
Ella Ewing Lake CA	Scotland	60	P, R, BR, PC
Clark CA	Clark	268	P, PC
Deer Ridge Lake CA	Lewis	6,921	P, R, BR, PC
Henry Sever Lake CA	Knox	1,115	P, R, BR, PC
Tolona AC	Lewis	176	P
White Oak Bend AC	Knox	160	P, PC
McPike AC	Marion	79	P
Sunrise AC	Marion	40	
Black Hawk AC	Marion	137	P, BR, PC
Dunn Ford AC	Marion	136	P
Soulard AC	Marion	270	P, R, BR, PC

*P = Parking Lot, BR = Boat Ramp, R = Restroom, PC = Primitive Camping